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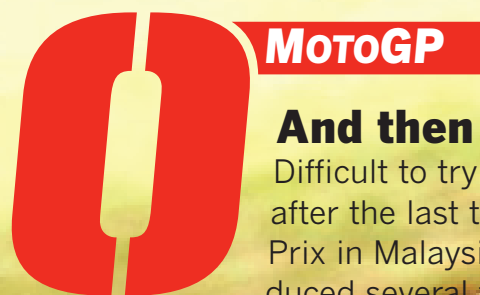
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IN TOUCH WITH YOUR TIME







And then there were 13...

Difficult to try and get a handle on MotoGP after the last three weeks. The events of Grands Prix in Malaysia, Australia and Japan have produced several turn-ups and one world champion, which means the finale in Valencia next week is unmissable. Either Lorenzo or Marquez will be crowned as well as one of the Spanish trio in Moto3. With 51 career victories, 200 for Yamaha and 7 this season leading to a 13 point deficit after 17 rounds 'JL' goes to Cheste without needing to look over his shoulder and nothing to lose

Photo by yamahamotogp.com/Milagro



PLAY







PLAY

Inching it...

The Supercross season open/closed with a ten lap sprint for the memory banks at the Monster Energy Cup in Las Vegas. Ryan Villopoto and James Stewart enacted a spellbinding show for victory in the second race, decided controversially and dramatically. Watch the clip and don't forget there are just nine weeks until the whole AMA/FIM campaign starts again in Los Angeles

Photo by Simon Cudby



SX-MX



MX

Reaching for a return...

In the world of racing people quickly forget...or do they? Steven Frossard was the hottest property in MX1 just two years ago before he became the epitome of injury misfortune in 2013. The Frenchman is starting anew with a factory Kawasaki for 2014 and we caught up with him to see how he approaches a career revival

Photo by Ray Archer





The Barstow

STARRING
CUSTOM BIKE BUILDER
KIM BOYLE
Photo: Dimitri Coste



Words: Jeff Kanda

The Legend - Primer



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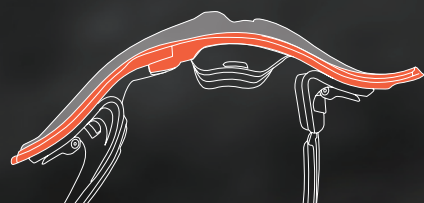


California



FIVE FIVE

NECK BRACE



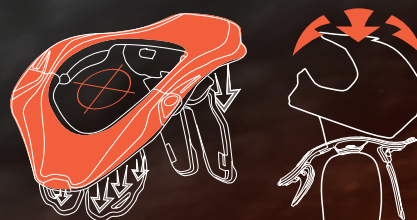
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MotoGP

AirAsia GRAND PRIX OF JAPAN

MOTEGI · OCTOBER 27th · Rnd 17 of 18

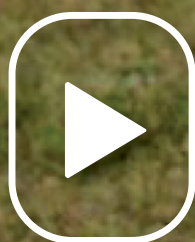
MotoGP winner: Jorge Lorenzo, Yamaha

Moto2 winner: Pol Espargaro, Kalex

Moto3 winner: Alex Marquez, KTM

TO THE BITTER END

By Matthew Roberts Photos by Milagro, Honda Pro Images, Ducati Corse Press,
www.yamahamotogp.com, Tech3.fr, Gold and Goose, www.motor-racing.tv/marcvds/bike



PLAY





7 wins and 13 podiums for Lorenzo, 6 and 15 for MotoGP class rookie Marquez. After seven months and 17 rounds the 2013 contest comes down to 20-odd laps, 45 minutes and 13 points

Rarely has there been a more dramatic eight days in the history of MotoGP World Championship than those that took place in the last two races at Phillip Island and Motegi, where instead of wrapping up a title that had looked so inevitable when he opened up a 39 point gap at Aragon, Marc Marquez allowed Jorge Lorenzo the opportunity to keep his defence alive until the final round. If there was one lesson to be learnt from the flyaway events it's that anything can happen in motorcycle racing and Marc knows better than anybody that Valencia is far from a foregone conclusion.

We are all well aware now that Phillip Island was a monumental mistake on the behalf of the team, the like of which could feasibly have cost Marquez's trusted crew chief Santi Hernandez his job. However that shouldn't overshadow the perfection of Lorenzo's performance, which saw him take the flag some twelve seconds ahead of his team-mate Valentino Rossi, who had started from the front row of the grid. Rossi may be in the twilight of his career but even at his best it is hard to imagine him keeping pace with Lorenzo at his current peak.

Motegi, meanwhile, was an example of metro-nomic mastery and arguably a level of riding that we have never previously seen in MotoGP. From the second lap to the fifteenth he recorded just one lap outside a margin of three tenths but the majority were virtually identical 1'46.1s, before he stepped up the pace into the 1'45s, times that Marquez had to take too many risks to match.

What makes this speed so remarkable was the fact that none of the riders had any dry track time to find a set-up over the course of the weekend other than the morning warm-up, when Lorenzo completed just six laps on Bridgestone's new 'super soft' rear before deciding to gamble on it for the race. Like pretty much everything he is trying at the moment the gamble paid off and his 1'45.736 on lap 16 was within two tenths of the circuit record lap set by Dani Pedrosa on his way to a second straight victory last season. At their home track Honda could not nail a setting for Pedrosa to even threaten a third success.





Lorenzo's precision was outstanding and the basis for one of the very best performances from his 51 Grand Prix wins. He is one more victory away from Phil Read and sixth position on the all-time list

MotoGP MOTEGI



Typical form and shape from Marquez who used his championship experience from 125s and Moto2 to play the percentages. Even if Lorenzo sprints away again at Valencia next week then the 20 year old just has to keep the Honda in the top four to make history by the smallest of margins



Valencia is a race with a history for throwing up weird weather and unexpected drama. You only need to look to last year, when Lorenzo pressed the eject button while leading on a damp track for proof, but who could forget the last time the championship went to the wire there? In case your memory is on the blink then it was in 2006, when Valentino Rossi arrived with an eight-point lead over Nicky Hayden, only to slide out after a few laps and hand the title on a plate to the American who's led a valiant chase all through the campaign (suffering his own team 'malfunction' when a young Pedrosa smashed him out of the Portuguese round several weeks previously).

Whatever happens in Spain though, at the end of a season that will always be remembered for the record-breaking feats of Marquez, we should also recognise the brilliance of Lorenzo, who is still the man setting the standard for the others to match. The title will be fully deserved by either rider.





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Motegi 2013

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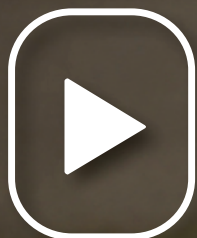
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PLAY

MotoGP MOTEGI



Espargaro becomes the fourth Moto2 champion (the third Spaniard to do so) and his run of three wins and five podiums in the last five events helped considerably to his success. Meanwhile further heartbreak for the last non-Spanish Grand Prix winner Scott Redding (at Silverstone) who manfully tried to compete in Japan but was scooped out of the running before he had a chance to prolong the inevitable







Motegi was a place for worry. Earthquakes, incessant rain, brake troubles (for Rossi and Crutchlow) and little time for dry-track set-up. Nicky Hayden was getting back into the Honda vibe at the company's circuit

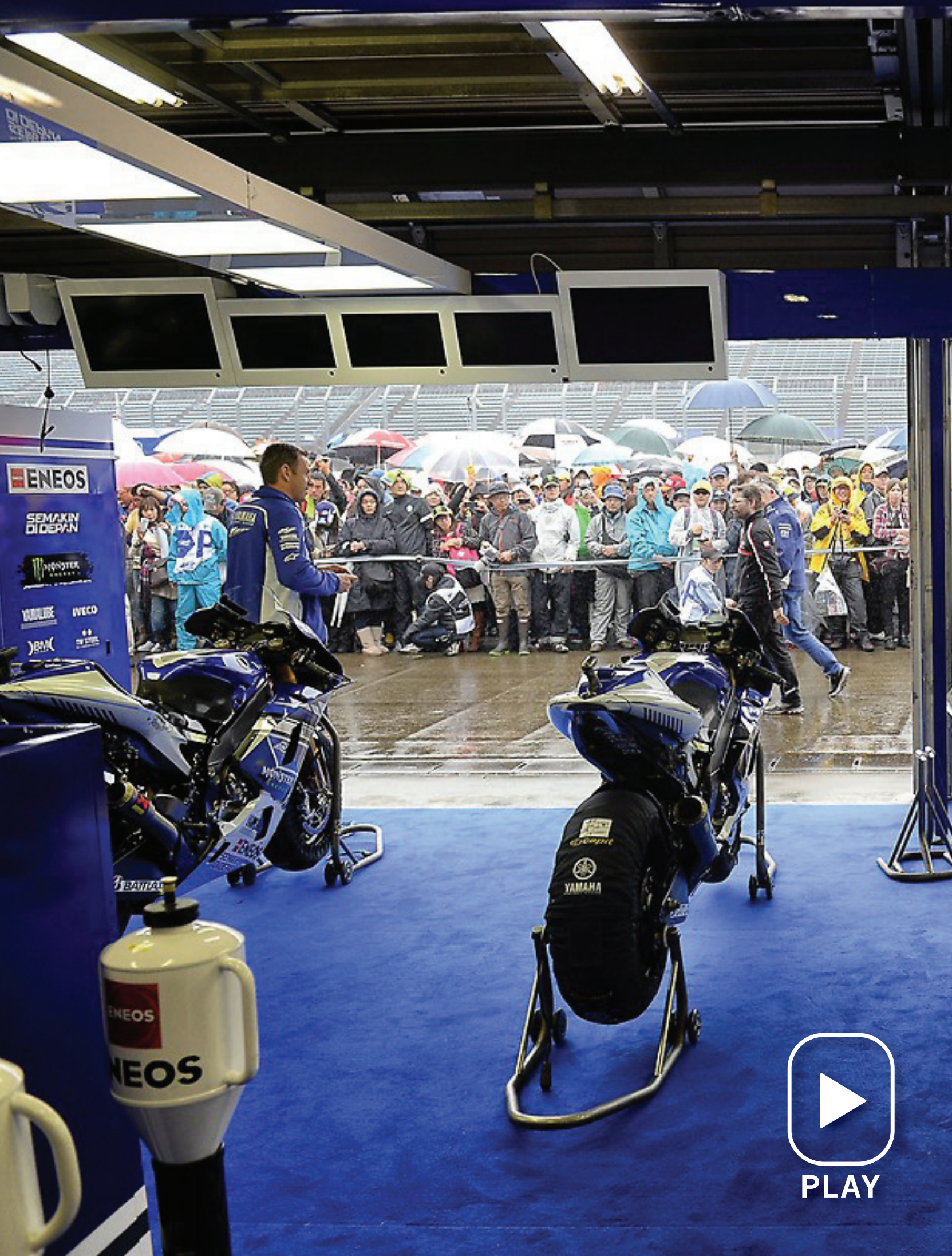
Bradl hobbled to the LCR Honda and made his way to a decent fifth position. The German can still grab sixth in the 2013 standings if he bags 15 more points than Baustista at Valencia



Alex Marquez (right) just edges to his first Grand Prix win (sooner than brother Marc) and events in Moto3 - with a disbelieving Luis Salom DNF-ing at the wrong time - means a mouth-watering prospect lies in store at Valencia. KTM set a new record with 20 consecutive victories in Moto3








PLAY





Bautista has finished in the top five for the past four events. The flyaways were clearly a decent period for the underrated and hardworking former GP winner



CLASSIFICATION & CHAMPIONSHIP

MotoGP RESULT

Riders

1	Jorge Lorenzo, SPA	Yamaha
2	Marc Marquez, SPA	Honda
3	Dani Pedrosa, SPA	Honda
4	Alvaro Bautista, ITA	Honda
5	Stefan Bradl, GER	Honda

MotoGP CHAMPIONSHIP (AFTER 17 OF 18 ROUNDS)

Riders

Points

1	Marc Marquez	318
2	Jorge Lorenzo	305
3	Dani Pedrosa	280
4	Valentino Rossi	224
5	Cal Crutchlow	188

Moto2 RESULT

Riders

1	Pol Espargaro, SPA	Kalex
2	Mika Kallio, FIN	Kalex
3	Thomas Luthi, SUI	Suter
4	Xavier Simeon, BEL	Kalex
5	Julian Simon, SPA	Kalex

Moto2 CHAMPIONSHIP (AFTER 16 OF 17 ROUNDS)

Riders

Points

1	Pol Espargaro (c)	224
2	Scott Redding	224
3	Esteve Rabat	204
4	Mika Kallio	185
5	Dominique Aegerter	151



Moto3 RESULT

Riders

1	Alex Marquez, SPA	KTM
2	Maverick Viñales, SPA	KTM
3	Jonas Folger, GER	Kalex KTM
4	Miguel Oliveira, POR	Mahindra
5	Romano Fenati, ITA	FTR Honda

Moto3 CHAMPIONSHIP (AFTER 16 OF 17 ROUNDS)

Riders

Points

1	Luis Salom	300
2	Maverick Viñales	298
3	Alex Rins	295
4	Alex Marquez	200
5	Jonas Folger	163



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Toni Cairoli's fourth successive MX1 world championship title aboard the KTM 350 SX-F was another step for the Italian towards matching the remarkable 10 titles won by legend Stefan Everts.

As team boss, Stefan also got to witness Jeffrey Herlings, with 14 GP wins in succession on the KTM 250 SX-F, pulverise another record of his. Just 18 years old, Jeffrey was simply untouchable in winning his second MX championship title.

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KTM



WRONG RUMBLINGS...

By Matthew Roberts

If you thought the action on track during the flyaway races was dramatic, it was nothing compared to some of the shenanigans going on around the paddock and hotels, where for three weeks only the teams, riders and journalists live together like a huge travelling circus. Earthquakes, typhoons and tsunami warnings gave us all plenty to talk about and there were enough amusing stories going around the paddock at Motegi to keep us going while we waited for the fog to clear and the track to open.

The Monster Tech3 garage proved to be one of the best places to pass the time on Saturday morning, where hours of fun were spent goading one of the team's French mechanics, who was so paranoid about reported radiation leaks from Fukushima that he would only eat dry noodles brought from home, made using bottled water that he had also packed in his suitcase.

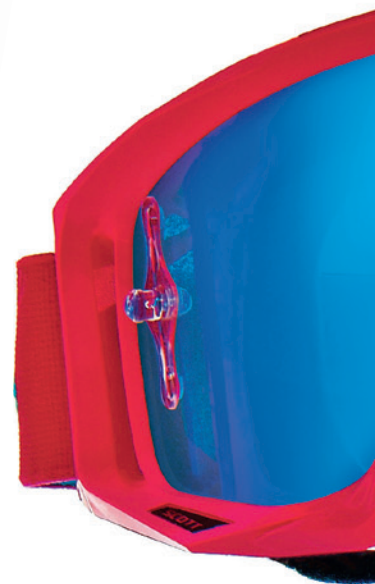
The most entertaining earthquake report came from renowned eccentric Spanish journalist Emilio Perez de Rozas, who blogged about his experience of the 7.3 quake that rocked Mito in the early hours of Saturday morning. This was Emilio's first ever earthquake and like many others in the Daiwa Royten hotel where he was staying his reaction was one of pure panic. Dashing downstairs at 2am in his pyjamas he told of bizarre scenes that met him in reception: mechanics sat on the floor - some praying, some joking and some with their bags packed ready to leave - as well as Efrén Vázquez calming down his girlfriend, who was in tears. No doubt the sight of Emilio running around in his pyjamas would have cheered them all up no end.

Emilio quoted several other people's version of events, including Maria Salom, mother of MotoGP star Luis. "I woke up suddenly and went to wake Luis," says Maria. "I said 'Luis, Luis, the hotel is shaking!'" He said, "I know, calm down mum it's normal. It will stop, just go back to sleep." But how could he be so calm?" Remarkable indeed, if only for the startling revelation that at the age of 22 Luis Salom shares a bedroom with his mum.

To be fair I must admit almost crying for my mum when the quake woke me up at the same time. For anybody who has not had this experience it feels and sounds like a train is passing through the floor below you. The coat hangers were rattling in the wardrobe, the walls were creaking and the entire room swaying from side to side like a ferry on choppy seas. For some reason I quickly went and put my underpants on - not that I thought they'd offer me much protection, I just didn't want to get dragged from the rubble in the buff!

Cal Crutchlow says he slept through most of the rumble, telling girlfriend Lucy not to worry because it was 'probably just the typhoon.' "Just the typhoon? Well that's ok then!" Lucy joked the next day. There were plenty of fun tweets from the riders, including helpful earthquake survival tips from the likes of Damo Cudlin, who suggests lying in the bathtub with a mattress over you as an interesting alternative to grabbing your briefs. My favourite, though, had to be from Alvaro Bautista: @19Bautista: Nice movements during the night!! An earthquake that made me wake up and just hold strong to the bed...hahaha!

I know how he felt.







A close-up, black and white photograph of a motorcycle's engine and handlebars. The engine is on the left, with a black oil cap and a yellow oil reservoir visible. The handlebars and controls are on the right, featuring a red throttle grip. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

898 PANIGALE

BITE SIZE

By Roland Brown, Photos by Milagro

A WET IMOLA OUTING FOR ROLAND BROWN DOESN'T
DAMPEN OUR TESTER'S ENTHUSIASM FOR THE NEW
898 PANIGALE. EXCITEMENT IN SMALLER DOSES



Italians have come up with a nickname for Ducati's latest super-sports bike: "Panigalina". The word basically means 'baby Panigale' and, in case that's not cuddly enough on its own, it ends in the feminine "a" (all motorbikes are feminine in Italian).

Some baby girl. The smaller Panigale might be the junior member of Ducati's hyper-sport range, replacing the 848 EVO and sitting below the 1199 Panigale, but with a capacity of 898cc its desmo V-twin engine gives away only 18cc to the legendary 916 of twenty years ago, and its peak output of 150bhp is a hefty 36bhp higher.

In fact, the Ducati 996 on which Carl Fogarty won his third world Superbike championship in 1998 produced a claimed 158bhp. So this so-called middleweight streetbike — Ducati have invented the term "super-mid" for it — is barely less powerful than Foggy's all-conquering factory weapon of just fifteen years ago. Yet the 899 Panigale is not designed to be an aggressive, racetrack focused machine like the 1199 Panigale. Ducati say it's created with a 50:50 split in emphasis between road and track, and is intended to be fast but unintimidating. With its aim of rider-friendliness the 899 also differs subtly from its predecessor, the rev-happy 848 EVO.

898 PANIGALE



The 898cc, eight-valve desmo V-twin engine follows the Superquadro format, with dimensions of 100 x 57.2mm that mean it's almost as radically oversquare as the 1198cc unit. Other Panigale features include the cam drive by chain and gear, rather than belt as on the 848; and the flyweight that acts as a decompressor at low revs, allowing a smaller starter motor and battery.

The new engine includes a few cost-cutting measures, such as the use of aluminium instead of magnesium for clutch, cylinder head and oil sump covers. But the 899 follows the bigger Panigale by having three riding modes — Race, Sport and Wet — for rapid fine-tuning of power output, throttle response, traction control, engine braking and ABS level.

In similar fashion the 899's chassis is also a Panigale family creation, based on a mono-coque aluminium frame that acts as the airbox and uses the engine as a stressed member. The smaller V-twin unit is rotated back slightly, allowing slightly racier steering geometry. Some expense is saved by using a steel instead of aluminium rear subframe. There's a twin- instead of single-sided aluminium swing-arm. Suspension is by Showa's 43mm Big Piston Forks and a similarly multi-adjustable Sachs monoshock. Front brake calipers are Brembo Monoblocs but they're the conventional M4 units rather than the 1199's top-spec M50s.









Despite rain on the Imola launch it was still possible to have a lot of fun on the 899, fitted with Pirelli's racing wets in place of the standard Diablo Rosso Corsas. Even in Wet mode, which softens throttle response and cuts maximum output to 100bhp, the Ducati felt quick and controllable. Provided the tacho was showing 7000rpm when I wound the power back on, the Ducati accelerated towards the 11,500rpm limit with a satisfyingly surge, traction control light often flashing but the rear Pirelli finding improbable amounts of grip.

Selecting Sport mode generated as much extra wheelspin and traction control action as forward motion. But this baby Panigale is a seriously rapid superbike, with more low-rev grunt than its 848 EVO predecessor, as well as a stronger top-end kick. Acceleration was also helped by the gearbox, which was impressively slick and aided by the efficient quick-shifter.

The chassis was also very impressive, as far as the conditions allowed. At 193kg wet the 899 is 5kg heavier than the 1199 but lighter than the 848 EVO despite having ABS as standard. As well as having steeper geometry than the big Panigale it also has a narrower 180-section (instead of 200) rear tyre that should aid manoeuvrability. Spring rates at both ends are roughly ten per cent softer, for more road-going comfort, as is the 5mm thicker seat.

Without riding it on dry tarmac it's impossible to know how well its suspension would have coped, although the Showa BPFs and the Sachs shock unit are well tried components. One chassis part that did have a chance to shine was the front brake, which even in the wet was superbly powerful, backed up by the grippy front Pirelli and the ABS system. That would be welcome on the road, where the 899 offers a few more advantages over its 848 EVO predecessor. At 17 litres its tank is 1.5 litres bigger. Ergonomics are also slightly more relaxed. Despite being tall I found the bike reasonably roomy, but wasn't the only rider to find my boot occasionally slipping off a too-smooth footrest in the wet.

Although the 899 can't match the larger-capacity Panigale's awesome power output and acceleration, it has plenty of both plus potential to be an excellent track-day bike. The 899 is not just a less powerful, expensive and desirable version of the 1199, but a fast and capable superbike that would arguably be better suited to many riders, especially those planning to ride mainly on the street.

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SX/MX

MONSTER ENERGY CUP

LAS VEGAS · OCTOBER 19th

First: James Stewart, Suzuki

Second: Ryan Dungey, KTM

Third: Ken Roczen, KTM



SHOWTIME

By Adam Wheeler, Photos by Simon Cudby

MONSTER ENERGY CUP



PLAY



People go to Las Vegas to get it all, forget it all or just be absorbed by it all. The events and key moments of the Monster Energy Cup are well known by now; James Stewart, Joker Lanes, high profile crashes, surprise rookies and faulty electronic start gates. For all the factors that went into this third edition of the million dollar race (725,000 euros, 619,000 pounds) the inescapable storyline of the event was the scale of entertainment on show.

Some of the stuff almost appeared to be scripted. Two missed Joker Lane entries by riders who can count their mistakes on one hand throughout a twenty-nine race season? Come on!

Stadium numbers were up, TV interest had increased (live CBS broadcasts) and there were even more riders on the gate for this test/cash-earner (what a debut Mr Stewart) so people are clearly buying into the Monster Energy Cup as novel season-closer/opener fixture.

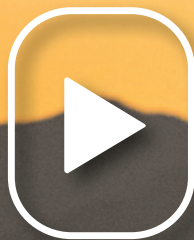
Being at the Sam Boyd is decidedly mellow compared to a round of the AMA Supercross series. The presence of the kids and amateurs helps with the celebratory nature of it all and the proximity to the world famous Strip means that the party vibe around bikes, burnouts, girls and racing doesn't necessarily have to stop when the diggers are heading into the stadium and mowing down the triples. October 18th is already pencilled in for 2014. Flights are not too pricy to LA where the drive into Nevada can be quite painless in five hours.

It is well worth a look when the Motocross of Nations has exhaled all the air of the motocross season and cold autumn rain is starting to batter Europe. Over the following pages we showcase some of the best words (quite prophetic) and images we digested through three mad days in Vegas.

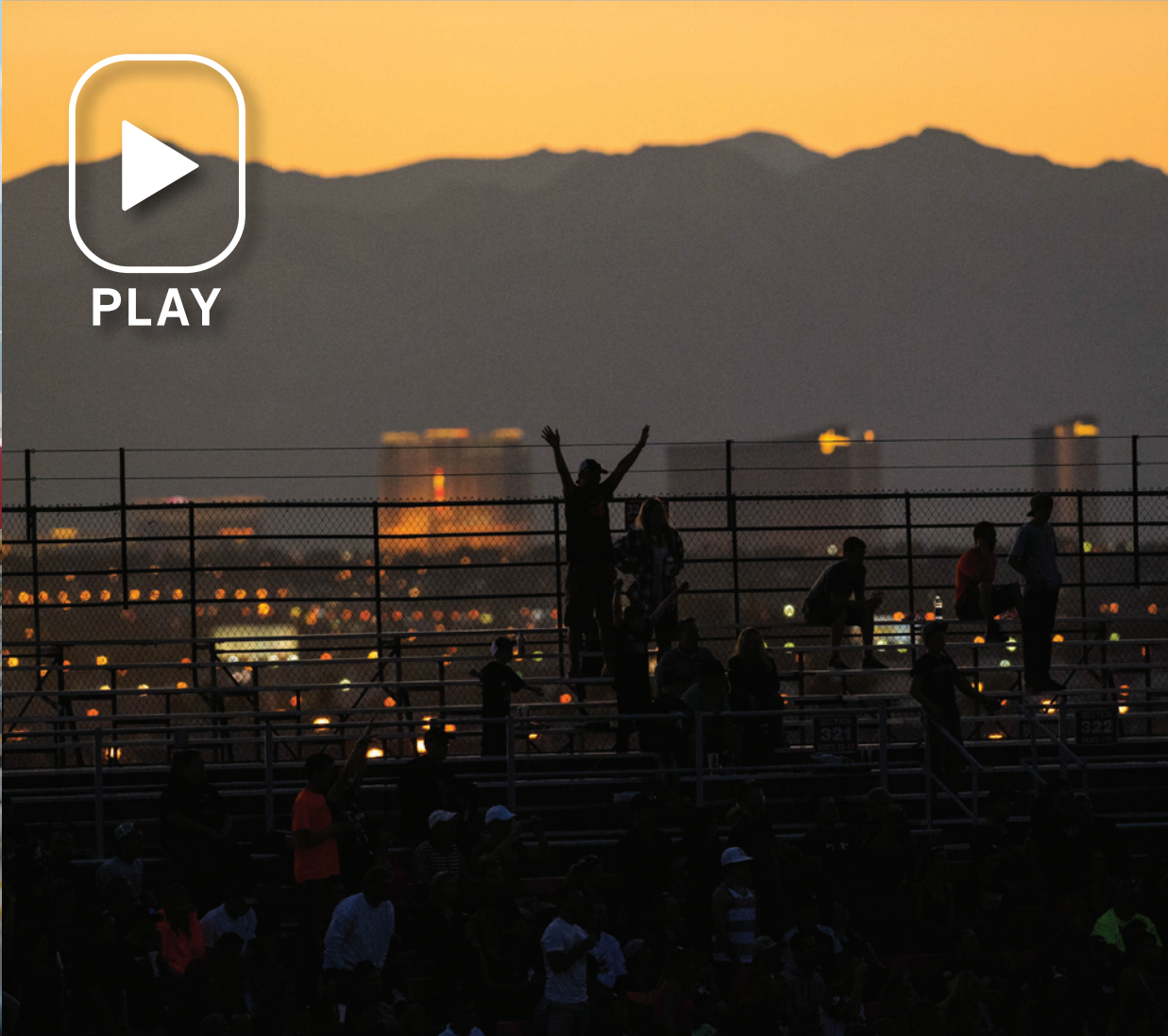


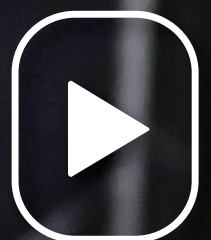
MONSTER ENERGY CUP

MAIN EVENT 1



PLAY





PLAY

JAMES STEWART: 'ROOKIE' WINNER

On making the MEC for the first time...

The first year I was going back and forth between the team I am on, Suzuki, and JGR so I didn't actually have a ride. Last year I was coming off my finger injury from Unadilla and only had had a week or so riding the motorcycle. This time everything came together perfectly. I had some time off and just started riding a few weeks ago, so I just wanted to come out and race.

On the novelties of the event and the vibe...

I think [watching] last year with the Joker Lane was pretty cool. It was really cool actually to see how Eli used it in the last moto. It's interesting. The money is on the line obviously. For me personally I used to race the U.S. Open when they had the amateurs out so that combined and seeing all the Seven crew here is cool as well. What I like about the Cup is that the track is new and a bit more open than the regular supercross. It is a bit faster.

On rivalries with his peers...

We don't talk to each other that much but this is racing. We have respect for each other. You know media has changed. Back in the day you didn't have social media and such a big reach. You didn't do something in a second and then two seconds later it was everywhere. It is about how people and the media spin it. As racers we want to do the job and then go home without worrying about whether the house is going to be on fire or people are talking about us during the week.

On career evolution...

I enjoy racing and enjoy being up here. To be able to have this gear line – Seven – and be able to sponsor some of the kids is cool. Also to race against my brother in the Troy Lee team. The ride days...I have good chance to talk to the kids and I always liked that but to be a business owner is something different.

On taking a break...

I'm healthy and I had the chance to take some time off without being injured. I've been racing motorcycles for twenty plus years and it has been good to walk around without having a cast on. We learnt more as a team about racing outdoors and that set-up than we did in Supercross. I think the bikes have got to a point where they are pretty good and pretty even. Back when we were riding two-strokes they were factory bikes and a lot of it was about the rider, and it still is, but technology has gotten better. Now we are here to test to a few things but I feel much more comfortable and I'm excited to get out there and race.





RYAN VILLOPOTO:
MEC MILLIONAIRE BUT CRASHEE
FOR THE LAST TWO EDITIONS

On being ready for the Monster Cup...

I'm 100% and I feel that we are here to get our feet wet for the new season and see where we are at. Being as this is one-off race we are all here to learn. Everybody's goal is Anaheim 1 and to leave here with a nagging injury or any sort of injury is not going to do any of us any good. We will see how things play out and where we are on the track position-wise and try to play our cards right.

On getting rich...

It is also bragging rights...who can finish off the year with the last win before we all line-up at Anaheim 1. There is added motivation [with the money] but more than anything you are only as good as your last race...so bragging rights until Anaheim.

On the practical use of the MEC not carrying a technical rule book...

I don't think we need any more horsepower! There are a lot of rules in AMA Supercross that you have to abide by whereas there are none here. So why would you use something here that you cannot at Anaheim 1...or at all seventeen rounds I should say?



PLAY





CLASSIFICATION

MEC RESULT		
Riders		
1	James Stewart, USA	Suzuki
2	Ryan Dungey, USA	KTM
3	Ken Roczen, GER	KTM
4	Eli Tomac, USA	Honda
5	Marvin Musquin, FRA	KTM



RYAN DUNGEY:

UNJOKERED 100% PODIUM MAN

On his podium presence and view of the MEC...

Every year it seems like it is getting more and more stacked and more guys are showing up. There is a lot on the line and for sure I'd like to get the win. I've had a good couple of weeks. To win would be great and to have a million...that would be amazing.

On being runner-up at the MX of Nations...

It is worth celebrating and it is a pretty respectable position but when you have won that many times nobody cares where you are unless you are winning. It was a tough one for us this year but nobody knows what it is like to be in our shoes for that event.

On the MEC format...

The ten lappers are very short. It is less than a minute lap time. It is an all-out sprint effort and there is not much room for error. I think the Joker Lane is something different. In Supercross the bikes are getting faster and the equipment is getting better. The speeds are high and you can only fit so many lanes in a stadium. I think this event is a good chance for the track builders to experiment and for us to then race on it. I like the Talladega bank and just switching stuff up is something cool. In the last few years the builders have come up to us and asked what we thought for the Supercross series. It is not about making it easy for us but more competitive. If five of the top eight guys are out and there is only two battling then it doesn't do any good for the fans.

On whether Tony Cairoli should try the MEC...

I did get an opportunity to hang out with them [Tony and Jill] in Spain and from my understanding he likes supercross but doesn't like the whoops. Those are the hardest thing to perhaps get dialled in when riding supercross. The European guys are really talented and they do things that you don't see American riders doing. They stand up a lot and have a lot of strong points. I never really asked him directly but with anything if you come over here and get enough 'seat time' then... he's a multi world champion. It is tough and it is for all of us but it would be a challenge. I'd like to see him come over.



ELI TOMAC:

BUSTING OUT THE PINK GEAR BUT NOT THE STARTS

On the switch between 250 and 450 machinery...

When you make the jump back and forth it can get a bit difficult sometimes. It is a whole different bike and the way the engine feels underneath you. For me I would have to say that this is the beginning of 2014. At least because I'm jumping into the 450 class for the first time. It is a whole new fresh start.

On the MEC...

This race really is fun and I think we will still see more guys doing it because the format is different; the Joker Lane, split start and the three ten lappers. It spices up the night.

On wearing the new pink Alpinestars gear...

It is breast cancer awareness month and my mum was going through some treatment earlier this year. She has actually done really well with it and is going on the upside. It is great to see. So I'm just showing support for her.

On the differences to other riders at the Motocross of Nations...

It is pretty close. Nothing too out of this world I guess. The biggest thing is the fans. They get way more into it than we do over here. It would be cool to see some chainsaws and horns going on at the stadium!





JUSTIN BARCIA: **2012 WINNER, UNHAPPY IN 2013**

On the role of the Monster Cup...

The goal coming here is just to have a bit of fun and get warmed-up for the season.

On winning last year...

It was cool to get the overall win for sure but it wasn't cool that I missed the million bucks. I built my confidence up a little bit and to get a win right off the bat was cool. Then 2013 did not meet my expectations. I wanted to be fighting for the championship and didn't put myself in that position.

On how to beat the 'Ryans'...

Tough question! It's all about working hard and then coming out to make a good fight. I want to be in that fight all times, every weekend.

On being unable to win the million and potentially stopping somebody else taking the money...

We'll split it! It is another tough question and I'm not going to answer it! I want to win a million dollars and I want to win all three races, like every guy there. It will be a tough fight to do that.



**EDGAR TORRONTERAS:
VICTIM OF ABSURD
SCORING IN THE BEST WHIP
COMPETITION AND SOME
OUT-DATED TOOLS**

On being in Vegas...

It is the third time that I'm in Las Vegas and it's an honour to be here. It's such a well-known place for entertainment and ideal for an event like this. You are in a city where you can walk down the street and have to stop for thirty minutes watching some sort of theatre. I think the public are really into their motorsports and get behind the riders and the show. I like the reception we get.

On his job for the night...

I'm struggling with jet-leg! I'm motivated but we're having a few problems with the bike they gave us because it's from 2007! We had to buy some pieces and get them sorted out. We ate some hamburgers, I slept a lot last night, too much, but still woke up tired. I haven't been able to train so I'm hardly ready but we only have to do whips, which for me is something I do every day as a warm-up.

On the Monster Cup...

The Monster Cup is one of the most important events of the year for me as a Monster athlete. We have many freestyle championships and competitions and although this is a one-off it is worth maybe seven of any other meeting. I love the U.S. even from when I was a kid. It is a mecca for the sport. To be able to come here and train is the best. Home is a special place but this is where it is at.

On his next plans...

We go straight home as I have some big events in the coming weeks like Geneva and Bercy Supercross and then a couple of tours. Life is full-gas...until the body has had enough!





FEATURE



ZACH

Photos by Ray Archer

OFF-ROADER, MOTOCROSSER, BUSINESSMAN, GEICO HONDA REP

You were getting married this time last year. So first go at the Monster Energy Cup...

Yeah. I asked to come here because I wanted to ride the 450. It is a pretty big event and I wanted to see how I'd go. My preparation hasn't been as good as I'd hoped. I did the Six Days Enduro and then only had ten days from the time I got back from Europe to now. I rode twice at home and then came here and did four days on the 450 and that was it. I'm just going to try and get some good starts and put it up in there for a while...see where it takes me.

Outdoors pretty good, Indoors not so much. Was 2013 just a bedding-in year?

It took me a lot longer to get adjusted to the bike than I thought it would and now that we have those issues worked out we can move forward quickly and easily. I am a lot more at home now in the team and I think that is the big difference going into 2014 compared to this year. Every time we changed the set-up I thought we were near but it didn't turn out to be the case and I didn't have a good race trim for the bike. That was my biggest thing. I went into events thinking it was all-good but it wasn't the case. Anyway I already feel way more comfortable now than I did during the season.

Being in Italy for the ISDE did you get flash-backs of that Grand Prix life?

I thought when I left Europe I wouldn't miss it but I often do. I wish I could make it back more often to see everyone but it is hard with our schedule. You would think it would be easy to come home but after being there for five years it took an adjustment. With the Nationals being one day and all that stuff it was a big difference.

You mentioned getting used to being part of Geico Honda. Did you take back some experience from being with the Dixon crew for four and a half years?

Being on Steve's team taught me a lot because it was different to my lifestyle and the way I like to be. It showed me a whole new way to look at things and I still have some traces of that! My wife gets really annoyed with me because I still have some 'Steve moments' where I'll say 'it'll take care of itself' and then it won't! It was definitely a good experience and I really have to thank Steve because he did a lot for my career. He saved it, and I wouldn't be here now and walked the path I did if it wasn't for him. It is completely different to a team like this but it's good in its own way.

Did any of 2013 go as expected off the track?

The year was what I expected because the travelling is so much easier and so are the races on your body and your psyche after two-day GPs and three week trips away in the motorhome. It is almost one year since I have been married now and it has gone so fast. I'm enjoying being home with my wife and my family but I will definitely be over in Europe at some point though.

What's the plan after the Monster Cup?

After this I'm just going to take two weeks of physical training and then start testing on the first of November for next season.

How is the Club MX facility going in South Carolina?

It is wide-open. We have been really blessed with some awesome customers and the demand for it keeps growing. There are only a few places like it around. We are putting in a new wakeboard cable park soon and we hope to open another facility nearby that is not so serious – you could say – for people that just want to roll up, ride and do their own thing with great tracks but not necessarily all the support infrastructure. It is like 100,000 dollars for 40 acres, so not too bad. The visitor numbers are still climbing and we are turning people away every day, that's why we are looking at the practice facility. We don't have a lot of major debts and we've put money back into the complex so we can get it where we want it to be. Our philosophy is not to have any debts and have it operating with a good cushion.

There was also that segment in the Moto5 film. Looks quite tasty...

We had five guys over to do the film. I reckon Mikey [Neale, renowned cinematographer and Moto film contributor] and I nailed it for Moto4 but I think this will be a game changer.





JAKE

Portrait by Ray Archer, Action by Simon Cudby

ON THE COMEBACK TRAIL...

At the age of 26 Jake Weimer is not quite swinging the doors of Last Chance Saloon but some people would think so. The Idahoan has a diverse CV of success that includes Supercross titles, Nations winners medals, Bercy crowns and AMA Motocross trophies but 2013 was a hard term and he of course has the prolificacy of Ryan Villopoto several metres away from him in the factory Kawasaki awning. Weimer has not failed by any means but by his own admission he has yet to really deliver on the most-desired 450 in the paddock. 2014 will be an important year so we grabbed five minutes with the recently married '12'.

You've spoken in the press about resetting for 2014...

It is pretty simple really. It is time for me to get back to being at the front and being a contender. That's it really...or I straggle around for a few years in tenth place, but that sucks. It is all about rebuilding and getting back on it.

2013 will not be a year to look back on...

This season was hard what with the illness and the injury. I was so over it. I had some serious issues. I was doing so terribly and riding so crappy on the bike that I did not want to be there. I kept racing and it made things worse and worse and it was hard to come back from that. The last few nationals were OK for me and the last two weeks have been good at the test track. I feel like my confidence is starting to come back a little bit.

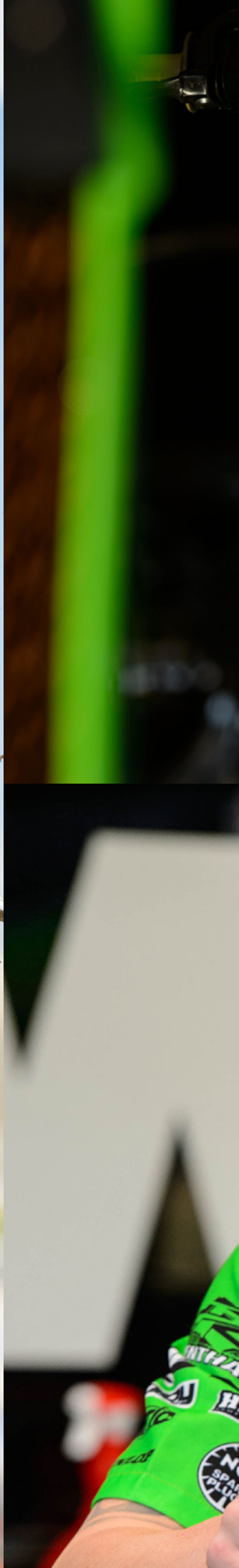
Do you take confidence through a sense of fitness or is it more a feeling on the bike?

It is more of a feeling to me. Of course you've got to be in shape to be able to get through the whole moto. But just because I'm in shape and I work hard doesn't make me feel ready and I'm gonna tear them up.





FEATURE





Being part of that Championship winning team...is there a ticking clock on your head?

I think everybody has a ticking clock on their head. Reality is reality but I have another year on my deal and obviously the team want to see some good results. It is not tough to figure out. If it doesn't work out then 'bummer', but what else are you gonna do? I'm trying and that's it.

There are eleven weeks to Anaheim 1. You've returned to your old trainer. Is there enough time to get the whole Weimer package right and ready?

Shoot, if you cannot do it in a couple of months then you're not going to do it. That's quite a long time. I worked with my trainer a few years ago so that transition was easy. We get along well.

So you changed the training programme. How is it different to what you had with Aldon?

It's different...but it's still the same type of stuff. I am still riding the road bike and doing the upper strength in the gym. The routines are the same.

Anything else being going on in your world?

After Lake Elsinore I got married and that took some time. We've been together for six years so Nicole was ready! A few months before I was kinda 'whatever' about it but once we got to the day and all the family and friends were there then we had a blast. I spend a lot of time in California and it is not where I'm from. I have family spread out a bit so I do not see them that often. It was really cool.



FEATURE





Portraits by Juan Pablo Acevedo,
others by Ray Archer, Simon Cudby, Tech3.fr

Mitch Covington is the person responsible for the wide application of the green Monster Energy 'claw' in virtually every form of motorcycle racing. And then some. The American oversees a multi million pound investment in everything from Drift to Dakar by way of MotoGP, Formula One, Grand Prix motocross and of course supercross. With athletes like Ryan Villopoto, Lewis Hamilton, Valentino Rossi, Jorge Lorenzo, Cal Crutchlow, Toni Bou, Stephane Peterhansel, Ricky Carmichael, Jeremy McGrath, Tucker Hibbert, Kurt/Kyle Busch, Ken Block, Edgar Torronteras, Chaz Davies, Pol Espargaro and many more on their roster it is fair to call Monster Energy one of the power players in 21st century motorsport.

With 2014 set to see yet more presence in MotoGP and continued series sponsorship in supercross, motocross and speedway the 'lifestyle in a can' philosophy and the unmistakable Monster Energy girls show no signs of ebbing away. We grabbed some exclusive words with Mitch in Las Vegas, not a million miles from Monster's central American base in Corona, east of LA.

Mitch, Monster put a million dollars in a box for the MEC each year. Can you tell us how the company see this meeting in the greater scheme of everything you have going on?

This is one of our major events of the year. Motocross, and supercross, is the platform that we built our brand on and the sport is part of our DNA. To be able to have an event like this is good for Monster Energy, good for our brand and good for the fans and the people that support us. I hope we can keep on making an outstanding meeting and Feld has done an incredible job in getting creative and putting on something different than just another supercross. You know we also have the show in the pits during the day. We like to showcase other athletes and not just Monster ones. As far as Monster is concerned then we also focus on what goes on before the race out in the pits. We want it to be an all-day event and hopefully all night into our after-party. We want to expose the world to the Monster lifestyle in 24 hours. So a lot of planning goes into making it different each year.

A million dollar prize is quite a big statement of intent isn't it? The third edition of the MEC shows that there is some longevity behind the project...

That is the neat thing about it. In the first year nobody thought that someone could win all three motos because supercross is so competitive but Ryan Villopoto came out and nailed it in 2011. I think Ryan winning the million dollars showed that it is attainable and it's worth taking a shot at this thing. It creates a lot of hype in our sport to have a million dollars up for grabs and it is a key part of the event. These guys are racers. If there is a top event going down and their peers are there then they will want to go and race. Secondly all the teams and brands are testing and dialling in their bikes for 2014 and this is close to most of the industry and is a good place to come and

have a look and not only what they have going on with their set-ups but also the competition. Keep the juices flowing in the off-season and I think the timing is perfect for the Pro teams.

It might be different if someone was winning it every year...!

I think the press that was generated around a motocross athlete winning a million dollars was well worth it. We didn't second guess it one bit. It's still up for grabs. We want it to be great racing and competitive but if someone gets on a roll and makes good starts then they are walking out with a million bucks.

In a way it is a shame there are not more Grand Prix riders here or more of an international presence. The event seems to have gone more 'supercrossy' in their absence...

We'd love to have the international guys come and compete but we also recognise that it is expensive to travel over and expensive to change your bike set-up for just one race. We'd like more international presence because Monster has a huge investment in the international motocross community as well with equal presence in the Grands Prix and other series down to amateur ranks around the world. This thing is still in the early stages and we hope as it evolves then more international riders will be here.

With Monster entering more and more series how will the priority remain for motocross?

Probably the thing that Monster Energy is most known for is motocross; it is like the face of our brand and that is true throughout the world. We are really proud to be a part of the MXGPs with Youthstream. We think they have done an outstanding job with the series and it continues to get even better. We don't really show any favouritism that the Monster Cup or Supercross is any more important than MXGPs. It is all good racing and we're 'in it'.





FEATURE



In MXGP the series has the right look and the brand is heavily placed but the championship is still a bit of a Red Bull 'show' thanks to KTM...

(smiles) For sure and that makes us want to win that much more. We have some guys coming along that need to step up their game and throw this thing down to Herlings and Cairoli. You know those guys are great; Cairoli, Herlings and the KTM crew have built a great programme and a good grass roots outlook to feed into their top series. We're playing a little bit of catch-up in Europe from a Monster-sponsored rider viewpoint but we have some top guys.

When it comes to U.S. you seem to have things wrapped up with motorsports but how do you feel about that reach internationally? Where might it go? What can you do?

We are neck deep in MotoGP with the Tech3 and factory Yamaha teams and Cal Crutchlow. We also have further investment coming in Moto2 and Moto3 as well as World Superbike and the British Grand Prix. We have a big dol-

lar investment in MotoGP because that sport is at such a high level and it is expensive to do. We are going to continue to try and win championships and the brand is built on winning. We're not going anywhere.

Did you get to many rounds this season?

I went to Indy and Laguna Seca and next year I will focus on the European rounds. I really wanted to get to Valencia in November but could not make it happen because of a conflict in schedule, but we're sending Jeremy McGrath and some other Monster people in. The championship is not over yet and we still have a shot. MotoGP has been great for us.

How do you see motocross and MotoGP?

Obviously there is a difference. Motocross and MotoGP are both motorcycle sports but are two very different things and characters. MotoGP is a different set-up of course but the fans are passionate and it takes a whole lotta balls to do that, as it does in motocross. Both are a good fit and we don't chose one over the other.



What about F1? You might say that Monster is not a natural fit with that exclusive world...

We enjoy the racing, and F1 has a wonderful history behind it. In terms of eyeballs on the sport it must be one of the most followed in the world and we are fortunate to be able to be there on the Mercedes team, to be associated with Nico [Rosberg] and Lewis [Hamilton]. Hopefully our presence grows there over time. Up until this point Monster has been predominantly a two-wheel brand but we've branched into NASCAR and disciplines like the Dakar and rally racing. Monster is built on three things: girls, parties and racing and we like F1 and will probably be around for a while

What about NASCAR then?

NASCAR has been great for us. We stepped up and became involved in Kyle and Kurt Busch and we're super-impressed with their professionalism and following. They fit in with our brand as far as their personalities are concerned. They are die-hard racers at heart. The ratings from a TV standpoint are good. The audience is a bit older but it is broader. It exposes our lifestyle to people that have maybe not seen or heard about it before. It is hard to argue with the racing. I know most people think they just turn left, but if you look closely then they'll see that it is some of the most

complicated racing out there. Those guys hang it out every week. We are somewhat of a blue-collar brand and the NASCAR demographic is a great fit. I don't know what the future holds for further investment but we'll be there for a long time.

In motorcycling Ryan Villopoto is arguably your most prolific athlete. He won't be around forever so is the search fully on for the next AMA shining star?

We probably have meetings about that two or three times a day! We do a lot of bench racing at Monster Energy and with our partners. We sponsor Team Green, the amateur programme at Kawasaki as well as some independent amateurs at other brands. We are trying to help the sport at ground level and bring the guys up through the scene. Whether they end up riding for us or another competitor...we spend a lot of time looking for that 'next guy' and we have to. We have been fairly successful. Ryan is such a commodity. He is a one-of-a-kind, once-in-a-ten year phenomenon. He is so dedicated to winning and while he is a super nice guy he is all business when it comes down to the track. He knows his job is to win championships and he does what it takes to put himself in the right position.

PERSPECTIVES...

By Steve Matthes

Well, that's a wrap on the off-season races. The GPs are over, the AMA nationals are done as is the Motocross des Nations. And the Monster Energy Cup is now in the memory books. It is time for everyone to exhale and start gearing up for 2014 and all that it will bring.

Unless of course you're one of a number of riders heading to Bercy, Genoa or Geneva for the big winter supercrosses in Europe. Or maybe you're a racer heading to Germany to do that series. OK, other than THOSE riders, everyone else can relax.

Here are some thoughts on a few different things while I wait for the 2014 GP calendar to be revised yet again:

I saw the press release last week that Red Bull KTM's Kenny Roczen has pulled out of the Bercy and Genoa Supercrosses that he had previously committed to and I wasn't surprised in the least. The PR said 'Personal reasons' but what it really should have said is 'my new trainer said I couldn't do it'. Roczen has teamed up with Aldon Baker for 2014 and a staple of Baker's program is to stay hunkered into your home base and do not leave for any reason or any amount of money. Baker is just a believer that the work is done in the off-season and travelling to Europe is too much of a strain on the body. Yes, I know it's only five days and Roczen was probably getting 50K each for these races but that's how it is in the world of Aldon Baker.

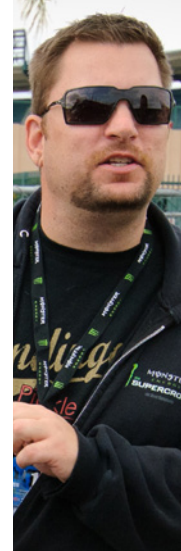
There's no doubt that Roczen is making a big commitment in terms of personal sacrifice and money to Baker and he's following the advice

on what he wants. It's commendable in one way and shows that the German is serious about his program next year. We had another one of Baker's successful clients on the Pulpmx Show a few weeks back and asked Ryan Villopoto (maybe you've heard of him?) about racing the off-season races and RV mentioned that it's just not worth it. The 50K (or much more for RV) you get from an off-season race can be dwarfed by the millions you can win if you win an AMA supercross or motocross title. You can debate the logistics of five days of travel out of the three months of off-season really affecting you but that's what Baker believes in and so that's that. Too bad for Roczen's fans but hey, if he makes a big step up in 2014 in the one area that is perhaps his weakest, you'll know that following Baker's lead is one reason.

“There's no doubt that Roczen is making a big commitment in terms of sacrifice and money”

One of the interesting things at the Monster Cup besides Monster Energy Kawasaki's sweet new look was Kawi's use of data acquisition that they had strapped onto the bikes of Ryan Villopoto and Jake Weimer.

Of course we've been reporting on the rule changes that have been relaxed to allow the teams to use GPS, which allows them to map out the track and check engine-related things like RPM's and throttle position as well as air/fuel mixtures. This



has been going on for a while now but at the MEC, Kawasaki engineer Theo Lockwood bolted on a rear shock stroke sensor as well as clutch arm sensor.

"I come from a road-race background so this stuff is not new to me and it's my personal goal to get it on the motocross bikes" Lockwood told me this week. "Motocross is tough because unlike road racing, the surface is always changing, bumps are coming and going and it's a learning process for all of us."

"Telemetry would be useful for the TV show," says Lockwood "Imagine if you could put on the screen what gear the rider is in, how fast he's going and compare two riders at once on-screen to help educate the fans?" When asked if there was any interesting data collected by the team after the race, Lockwood mentioned that the sensors measured Villopoto going between 60 and 65 mph when they were exiting the stadium. Pretty fast!

Another thing that struck me at the Monster Cup was the fact that during some bench racing with fellow media members it was remarkable how many good riders still didn't have saddles.

Yes, the economy has been better over here and the racing teams have been on a bit more solid ground but there's no denying the fact that we're not out of the woods yet. Remember 2013 saw three teams fold up (JDR KTM, L&MC Racing and Velocity 3 Racing) and this year it appears that there are still some world-class riders out there that don't have anything.

Count Kyle Chisholm and Phil Nicoletti isn't sure if he has a ride as N-Fab Yamaha hasn't committed to coming back (but if they do, one would think that Chisholm and Nicoletti have spaces there). Bobby Kinniry doesn't have anything. A top ten 250SX rider named PJ Larsen doesn't have anything and Christian Craig and Lance Vincent just up and quit the sport when they realized that they couldn't get anything.

"There isn't going to be much of a race when you can only get ten riders on the line..."

Our sport in America is a bit lopsided in that the very best riders like Ryan Villopoto and Ryan Dungey make five million dollars a year or more but yet the riders that finish about ten spots behind them (Chisholm, Nicoletti) are barely getting by. We're talking these riders can't even get a salary of 50K a year to race dirt bikes.

I'm not really sure what the answer is to fix this problem but I do know that there isn't going to be much of a race when you can only get ten riders on the line. We've got to all take a better look at ourselves and try to figure out something where we can allow some of these great riders a chance to, you know, make a living at this dangerous sport.

3

REASONS WHY **6D** HELMETS WILL TURN YOUR HEAD (...AND NOT YOUR BRAIN)

By Adam Wheeler, photos by Ray Archer and 6D

6D Helmets have already caused some ripples in the USA with their Omni Directional Suspension (ODS) system and now they are ready to start distribution on an international level. CEO Bob Weber took some time at the Motocross of Nations in Germany last month to go over some of the features and reasons why the 6D proposes a landmark stride in helmet safety technology. The ATR-1 model was over two years in the making...



GEICO

TK
KS

1

THE WHYS

It is estimated that there are almost ten times as many neurons in your brain as there are people on the planet. Naturally any method of safeguarding this 'matter' is highly valued, especially for athletes in high-risk sports or extreme event activities. Concussion is a bewildering and worrying injury with short and long term repercussions.

"What really happens to your brain in an accident? Well, the most serious thing is a rotational injury where it can swivel and then tear or rupture and cause trauma, haematomas and other problems," says Weber. "When you hit the ground there is going to be deceleration force."

The brain is swimming around in cerebrospinal fluid and according to 'Carpenter's Human Neuroanatomy' weighs about a kilo and a half. Any strike to this bag of watery mass and life starts to drastically change due to the sheer number of functions and roles the brain is conducting. One of the problems with motorcycling and in the case of helmet design

particularly is simply the variations of speed, angle and zone of impact when you crash. It is a subject that required millions of dollars of investment for Leatt in their evolution of the neck brace and is an area where 6D have based the crux of their project.

"Traditional helmet designs really haven't evolved that much in the last fifty years with managing and absorbing energy in a crash," continues Weber. "The problem is that there is not a lot of space inside the helmet. The certification standards to ride on streets and to compete ask for high energy capabilities, and that is a necessary thing for motorcycling but the problem is that it doesn't allow for the helmet to be active for the lower energy demands which is the primary place for accidents in motocross to happen. It is the lower threshold – the four metres per second range – that can be concussive and most helmets are not doing much work in those situations. The technology in the 6D helmet is active from the moment it comes into contact with anything."



D

FEATURE



2

A REACTIVE HELMET WITH A DISTINCT ROLE

“We have learnt a lot about the brain in the last ten years, probably more than in several decades in terms of impact and multi impact. American football is very front-and-centre and hockey also has issues with concussions. We need more solutions to help sportsmen and women. Off-road motorcycles are faster and capable of going higher and the athletes are better trained and stronger...the evolution of EPS liners in helmets has not really followed. The suspension capabilities of the 6D helmet is something that can do a better job for the athlete.”

The ODS system is a clever network of dampers. Weber explains. “We have an internal EPS liner that is suspended by 27 dampers that absorb energy and return the helmet to its standard position. Basically what we are talking about is rpms and the helmet reduces that rotational energy in an accident, our best numbers were an 81% reduction. A big part of this is because most helmet designs don’t have the means to decrease acceleration. The inside

liner has very good travel and can absorb and slow down the energy. You have much less radical transfer of energy to the brain. We are slowing it down and getting 2.5 times more ‘time’ out of the equation. The suspended liner allows for free motion capability inside the helmet and that’s where we got the name ‘6D’. It stands for six degrees of freedom. The dampers flex but also have the ability to sheer.”

“The technology is unique,” he adds. “It is a suspension system inside the helmet. The essential function or the primary purpose of the helmet is to protect the brain and the second is to protect the skull. Many people seem to forget that a skull fracture or any other cranial injury can have severe repercussions. The goal is to also provide a safe racing environment so the helmet flows a lot of air, it is lightweight and ideal for competition. One of the engineers was Robert Reisinger, a former pro motocrosser and Kawasaki development rider back in the day.”

3

TESTIMONY FROM THE TOP

6D found a powerful ally from the outset in the Geico Honda team. So riders like Tomac, Osborne, Hahn and Bell were all using the ATRs through AMA Supercross and Motocross campaigns. In Dallas and Oakland Bell and Tomac respectively carried out the least desired but most appreciated form of testing for the 6D crew (click on the video links to see why.

“We spent two years developing and testing and then sat down with the owner of the Geico team and shared the data we had collected on our helmet along with others we had tested,” says Weber. “Rick [Zielfelder] basically said it was helmets and boots that impacted his team in a negative way throughout the season. Eli was the first person to ride with us outside of our little group and liked it straight away.

For all the testing you do in the lab you never know how it will be translated to the human head and that night in Dallas we were watching the race on TV and saw Zach’s crash. It scared the hell out of all of us but he got up and for him to be able to pass the concussion test and be able to keep racing was a special moment for us.”

“I know for a fact that it does work and I notice far less of a sharp hit,” said the AMA Motocross Champion, mindful of his accident in northern California. “A small mistake can lead to a big problem and although I didn’t want to full test it, I did in Oakland this year because that was a big crash and I was able to get up and race again the next week. I truly believe in it.”





PUSH THE LIMIT



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FROSSARD: THE RE-DEAL

By Adam Wheeler, photos by Ray Archer

**CAN ONE OF FRANCE'S MOST EXCITING MOTOCROSSERS
MAKE THE HEFTY CLIMB BACK TO THE TOP?**



STEVEN FROSSARD



FEATURE

Steven Frossard has watched more than he has raced over the past two years.

The 26 year old has been part of the unfortunate – and quite startling – catalogue and chronicle of bad luck and injury nightmares that affected the factory Monster Energy Yamaha team since pre-season 2012. The fierce and fearless figure that terrorised the premier class in his debut campaign in 2011 has been marginalised, neglected and perhaps (not too unfairly) written-off after setbacks that included two knee ligaments problems and two broken feet. With the Grand Prix gate slimming and riders starting to pour into MXGP due to the 23 year age rule that will hit the FIM Motocross World Championship hard at the end of 2014 (some ten riders have to move out of the category and into MXGP) it was a little surprising that Frossard could count on a factory Kawasaki for the next campaign. For a section of the GP paddock, watched by the media collective, the past summer was a protracted chase of saddles, contracts and teams.

Somehow, despite his absence and the accrue-ment of just 126 points through 2012 and 2013 (Cairolì scored 1453), Frossard was able to swap Yamaha for Kawasaki next to Gautier Paulin. It is testimony to how much the Lyon resident is still highly rated.

His carry of the '183' to Green is proof that sometimes riders are not just as good as their last race. People can still remember Frossard's cocky usurp of Cairolì, Desalle and Pourcel's championship plans in 2011 and there is belief – certainly inside Kawasaki – that he can reach that level once more.

What is our opinion? Frossard is a stubborn fighter; there is no doubt about that. While his knee and feet has been susceptible over two years he has also been hoarding the frustration and angst that comes with being clipped in the prime of his career and it is hard to believe that the dry Frenchman still doesn't have something to contribute to MXGP. There are hurdles to jump of course and he is the first to recognise this...







2012 and 2013 have been full of peaks and troughs. Mainly troughs. How can you start to describe the impact of that time as a Pro athlete...?

It has been difficult! Last season I broke my knee and tried to come back mid-season and my feeling wasn't so bad but the first races this year were hard because I think I worked too much during the winter. Mentally I was a bit burned. We changed some things on the bike and it was getting better after the first couple of Grands Prix but then I broke my foot while training. It was something that wasn't my fault. Frustrated I tried to return quickly but it wasn't possible. After that I twisted my knee again while practicing and then broke the foot once more. It is difficult to try and explain 2013 in particular. It was very tough for me, the team, all my sponsors and everybody behind me. There is not much you can do but put it down to fate.

Did you discover much about the dark side of racing? The attention and spotlight going away...

A little but every time I had a setback I was putting distance between myself and the sport anyway. I wasn't looking at websites or magazines. I have a new challenge for 2014 and that should restart things.

It must be hard to have that distance from your livelihood...

It is not easy. Most of all because you know your own speed, your power and your potential. All these things, and you cannot use any of them at a race. It is a big block. Not being able to ride and perform.

You said you were mentally burned coming into 2013. Why was that?

In 2012 when I broke my knee [in practice for round two in Bulgaria] it was at a time when I was very confident both mentally and in my physical condition. To have that injury meant I lost a lot and it motivated me to come back even stronger, like I was in 2011. I worked so

much and looking back now I think I did too much; too much work and too much riding. When 2013 started I was not tired but I was already mentally tired. I also had some options with the bike and I believe I took the wrong way at the beginning. The combination meant it was a difficult time.

The Yamaha has had this unfair reputation of being difficult to ride yet Philippaerts won the MX1 title in his first season and you finished second in 2011. Is the gossip true?

For sure it is not true. I won Grands Prix and was runner-up in 2011 and was confident with-and-on the bike. The last two years have of course not gone to plan but the problems came from the injuries, not from the bike.

You could say you are quite 'battle-scarred' now. Have you learned more about who you are and whom you can rely on?

It is a difficult question. People do tend to drift away when you are not winning but I understand that because it is a situation you find in every sport. Suddenly you are not the story any more. It is part of the job. If you are not doing well at your job then you are not interesting for the people. In 2011 everybody was surprised at my speed and my results. Then I had two years of nothing. Maybe in 2014 it can be the same as 2011.

This year David Philippaerts came back from two years with wrist problems and wanted to get back with top ten and top five results. He did that to a degree. Will it be the same for you before you can start to think about beating Cairoli, Desalle and Paulin?

It is hard to say right now because my head is still geared towards the podium. Maybe at the start of next season I will need some time to get there but this is normal. If I am there then that is OK, good, if not then we will see what is happening. I am not like Philippaerts though. He is older and he has already won a title so the story is different.



FEATURE

STEVEN FROSSARD



Was it hard to sell yourself for 2014 and close that Kawasaki deal?

No. I wasn't asked about my injuries. I have known the boss of Kawasaki Racing Team, Thierry [Chizat-Suzzoni] for many years. He started with the CLS team and I think he is the only one over the last six years to always send me messages. When I won or when I broke something he would always give me a call. I think I can trust him because he puts trust in me. He didn't ask about my knee because he believes in what I can do.

Can you understand how some fans might think you are lucky to going from a factory Yamaha to a works Kawasaki after the past two years...?

There is a big difference between what the fans think and the people that work in or follow the world championship very closely. The bosses of the teams know that I can take podiums and I can win GPs and they are looking for riders who can fight for a title, not those who will push to finish in the top six or seven. Saying that I can understand what the fans might think about me. It is normal.

With Thierry's backing and the opportunity with KRT you must be excited about the future now...

Yes. It was a difficult decision to make though because I was very happy with work with Michele [Rinaldi] at Yamaha and it was hard to say I was moving on. He was a bit afraid that I was going to say that it was the bike and the team that was the problem but it was just about me, and the fact that I had two seasons without a good result. I told him this. He understands now why I want to change and not to start a new career but instead a new chapter, with a new goal. Like all riders my career is short and I want to make the most of it. KRT is a French team and I know the boss. For sure I will ride with Paulin and I imagine people are thinking it will be difficult to work with two good riders but I think we will pull together. It won't be a like a family but something similar.

What about Paulin? You are entering his 'domain' so to speak...

It won't be easy...but because of my relationship with the boss and the fact that I know he wants the best for his team there should not be a problem. What I don't know is Paulin's opinion of me. I know the bike will be good, I have no doubt about that just from past experience and the work I know they do with the U.S. In the beginning it might be a bit difficult to ride just because of the adjustment from going from the Yamaha back to Kawasaki but not a big issue.

You really ramped up your social media profile and activities in 2013 and seemed to interact with the fans more. Did you like doing that?

Yes, but I only wish I had reason to do more! More films and photos and updates. As always it is difficult to remember or find time to keep making posts when you have a timetable that involves a lot of time-consuming exercise or activities. The more you put on then the better it is for the fans.

What about future prospects? The gate seems to be getting smaller and around ten riders have to leave MX2 for MXGP next year...

I think it is OK but clearly it is getting difficult. If I don't get a good team for 2015 then I will go fishing or do something different. Motocross is my life but I can do what I want. I'm not a rider like Cairoli who wins so much and every year, but I feel that I have done something good at this level and I am already happy. I started with nothing with my parents and now I have a lifestyle where I can do what I want and I can play on a bike, bicycle, skis or whatever so I am thankful for that.

What about a message for the fans? Can you still be the one to beat Cairoli and be part of the top echelon?

Cairoli is such a consistent rider. He is almost alone in this respect but I know a lot of people who would really like me to beat him. Not to do it every week but if I can do like I did in 2011 then it would be good, especially for the public and the people watching on TV. It would be great to fight with Cairoli and the others. I want to be part of the show. That is the most important thing I think.

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KTM

GO YOUR OWN WAY...

By Adam Wheeler



For notable parts of the 2013 FIM Motocross World Championship it looked like the premier class was struggling for riders. Why? Simple: economics and the commercial sustainability of contesting seventeen rounds on four continents. MXGP might carry the status but that doesn't mean – right now in 2013 - it is any easier to take part. As we stretch further into the off-season there hasn't been any fanfare of new teams coming into the paddock. It is with some interest then that two former Grand Prix winners are aiming to submit their own set-ups for 2014 and it is not like we are talking about two riders hanging onto their careers by their fingernails.

David Philippaerts is an ex-World Champion, an ultra-fit athlete who lives for the sport and who is more than capable of a top ten/five finish on a normal weekend. Joel Roelants will still be 24 years old come the start of just his second season in the premier class next March and to suggest he has nothing left to offer Grand Prix after just one confidence-hit campaign is highly unfair. The Belgian is just too damn determined for that. Philippaerts will receive support from Yamaha and Roelants from Honda but they have to find the framework of a team as well as put food on the table by themselves.

While this rider/team owner tendency could be potentially short-termist (Christophe Pourcel hinged his CP377 squad on Monster Energy money and help from CLS and it lasted two seasons) there is also something slightly 'old-school' about it. The days of riders travelling around Europe for months in their own transport, bikes 'packed in the back' competing in Grand Prix one week and lucrative internationals the next strikes a parallel with the independence some top GP racers could again enjoy. The big hole is of course the lack of prize money and remuneration; riders with their own teams will have to

work out how to make it pay and this is where the essential role of sponsors comes in. It is the only way they can exist, and where Youthstream are striving to position Grand Prix by making it the most attractive proposition possible in some of the most fertile markets for people who might be interested in investment. Rather than a sponsor veering to a private team with changing personnel each year they will be more attracted by the rider's name and the allure that brings. I think we might see more athletes – who believe their time is not yet served in racing – taking up the same route. The age-old process of relying on employment in teams for wages is crumbling, certainly declining. The factories will remain the peak and offer the golden contracts but that is how it always was.

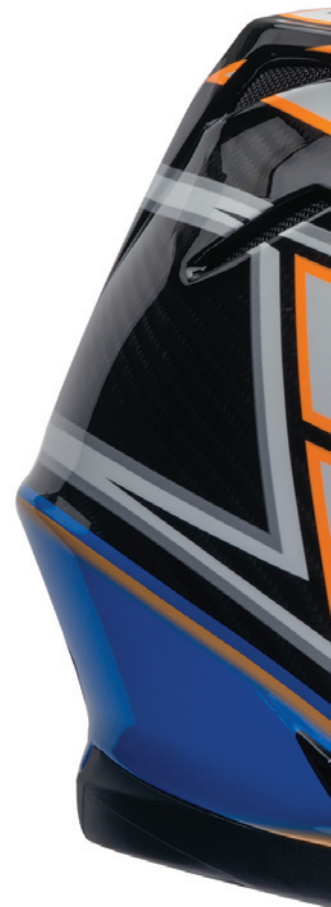
Rider/Team ownership it is not necessarily a new phenomenon and requires the GP rider to be more roundly aware of what he has to offer the racing world to take enough satisfaction (and coin) from it.

I think perhaps the hardest area hit through this period of evolution will be the salaries. Naturally riders looking to pay themselves will have to be mindful of a complicated budget to complete a racing year. Freedom does not come cheaply and the oft-walked myriad of claiming cash from sponsors or companies perhaps struggling themselves means it is not always systematic or straightforward. Liberty, however, might be the route back to a flourish in motocross and could affect generations to come. Where the factories are not the sole solution, and this is how MX is so well equipped with the man/machine equation still nicely tipped in a favour that will make the sport appealing. Look no further than Shaun Simpson's shoestring victory at Lierop this year for the wider ramifications of what was a career highlight for the Scot.

BELL HELMETS

There are few more historic and distinctive helmet manufacturers than Bell and with new European distribution operation in place it seems that riders (and fans of the brand) will be seeing more of the Americans' attractive designs and technology over the coming year. We've chosen to highlight the flagship off-road lid – the **Carbon 9** – and a curious retro road job called the **Bullit**.

The Carbon 9 is self-explanatory. A carbon composite shell means this good-looking and compact helmet is light to touch. It also comes with the now-standard efficient air flow system and is optimised for safe ejection of cheek padding via Bell's Magnefusion Emergency Removal System (MERS). The peak has a quick fit adjustment and the whole unit has a five year warranty. It comes in nine different schemes/colours and here you can see the Tagger Clash Blue and Scrub. The Bullit is inspired by Bell's first Star helmet and is a fully functional modern lid but with that retro vintage look, especially on the unmistakeable 'TT' alongside the Blue Flake. There are also nine different colour of 'shields' (visors) to choose from. Have a look at the website as Bell also boast some fetching casualwear in their 2014 line-up.







PRODUCTS





ALPINESTARS

Some issues ago we featured Alpinestars advanced knee protection after being gratefully invited to Asolo for a look at the labs and the research behind the vastly improved limb hardware. The two versions are now hitting dealers and shops. The **Fluid Pro** (white) comes in lightweight and strong fibreglass while the **Fluid Tech** is constructed from Carbon. To safely encase both legs with the Fluid Pro – which is probably the preferred choice for most hobby riders – will set you back around 400 euros. To use the Fluid Tech Carbon (in black here) then a price of 325 euros per brace (650 in total) is the figure. Worth it to safeguard ligaments, particularly as age catches on. As we've said before, the previous Fluid braces were quite heavy and fiddly but these incarnations for 2014 are a completely different product.

JT RACING

JT Racing is a brand that is melded to off-road racing, particularly in the U.S. and through a strong racing association that saw a fleet of legendary names associated with the company that originally began production through a line of socks.

That the motocross gear can still look so contemporary and relevant (the Evo Pro and Lite range being shown on these pages) is testament to the pull that JT can conjure. With helmets and a plethora of casualwear (from footwear to headwear) there is enough to go head-to-toe. For more information out of the UK then hit this link straight to www.decade-europe.com







BACKPAGE

By Simon Cudby





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'On-track Off-road' is a free, bi-weekly publication for the screen focused on bringing the latest perspectives on events, blogs and some of the very finest photography from the three worlds of the FIM Motocross World Championship, the AMA Motocross and Supercross series' and MotoGP. 'On-track Off-road' will be published online at www.ontrackoffroad.com every other Tuesday. To receive an email notification that a new issue available with a brief description of each edition's contents simply enter an address in the box provided on the homepage. All email addresses will be kept strictly confidential and only used for purposes connected with OTOR.

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